

or a University scholarship. He can hold the bursary at any school on the list, whether it be a State school or a registered secondary school. Not only will this give the academic type of child a chance of completing his secondary course at a school specially staffed and equipped for Sixth Form work, but it will also free the district high schools to give extra attention up to the School Certificate stage to the great bulk of their students who do not intend to take up University courses.

Child Welfare.—In my report for 1942 I dealt at some length with the steps being taken to meet the threat of an increase in juvenile delinquency that might well arise from war conditions. The Children's Court figures for 1943, I am pleased to report, do not show the sharp rise that many people feared. The total number of children charged with offences (including mischief, breaches of by-laws, traffic offences, &c.) was 2,493, as against 2,446 for 1942. An analysis of these figures shows a slight decrease in the more serious offences (against the person and against morality) and a rise of 5 in cases of theft: of the total increase of 47 offences, charges of breaking of insulators account for 36. In view of the numbers of disrupted homes due to the war and of the unusual temptations to which many young people were subjected during 1943, I should not have been surprised to see a much more serious rise in delinquency figures. I know very well that social workers of all types, both State and private, have found their work with children and adolescents increasingly difficult owing to these abnormal conditions, and I would pay a tribute to the part they have played in keeping the problem within bounds.

To assist the work of the Child Welfare Branch two more district offices were opened during the year, at Rotorua and Ashburton. Preventive work in all Child Welfare districts has been intensified.

An interesting experiment was started this year when it was suggested to the Education Boards that they appoint a limited number of "visiting teachers," who are really social workers without teaching responsibilities attached to groups of schools to deal with "problem" children of all kinds. Their appointment was first suggested by the growth in certain areas of a peculiarly difficult form of truancy in which the parent connives at the child's absence from school, but their work is by no means restricted to handling truants. They form a link between the school and the home, and have already dealt with scores of problems of most varied types. All reports received on their work from the Education Boards have been very encouraging, and I am hopeful that the visiting teacher system will do much to prevent children from ever appearing before the Courts.

One difficulty of developing or extending any form of social work in New Zealand is the lack of properly trained workers, and I am convinced that, the moment the man-power position allows, some scheme must be devised for the systematic training of persons who are to be engaged in serious social work of all kinds.

School Buildings and Equipment.—The war has had a very serious effect on the school building programme, the expenditure on new buildings being only £243,896 in 1943. Major buildings completed during the year included the Girls' High School and Hostel, Whangarei; the Manukau Intermediate School, Auckland; the partial rebuilding of the Motueka District High School; and the Girls' Home, Burwood, Christchurch.

The school accommodation problem is most pressing in and about Auckland, where the increase of school population has been greatest. As an indication, it may be pointed out that the number of births for all New Zealand in 1941 was 47 per cent. greater than in 1935: in Auckland the corresponding rise was 82 per cent. It is to be hoped that increased supplies of materials and labour will enable an acceleration in the building programme before these children reach the infant schools. To enable the accommodation situation to be temporarily met, arrangements were made during the year for one hundred prefabricated class-rooms to be constructed: these will be erected during 1944 wherever urgent demands for extra buildings arise.

A conference of Education Board architects was held which proved extremely useful. Among other things it discussed the plans for prefabricated rooms, and also made arrangements for some Boards to manufacture in their workshops large quantities of material for art and handwork, number teaching, and play-way activities in infant-rooms. Much of this material will be given free to schools during 1944.

Financial.—The total expenditure on education, including revenue from reserves vested in post-primary schools and University colleges, for the year ended 31st March, 1944, was £5,272,740.

An increased grant was given to Education Boards for the incidental expenses of School Committees, and regulations were amended to allow Committees to spend incidental allowances on a wider range of school equipment and material.

Acknowledgments.—I should like to express the Government's thanks to members and officers of Education Boards and other governing bodies, to teachers, to members of School Committees, and to all who have worked during the year for the welfare of the children of New Zealand. They have met with vigour and imagination the ever-increasing difficulties of these war years.

TABLES

NOTE.—Owing to the paper shortage several tables have again been omitted this year. They will be reinstated as soon as conditions permit. For particulars of expenditure on education, including capital expenditure on new buildings, &c., see the appendix to this report.

TABLE C 1.—PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS BY GRADE

Grade.				Number of Schools.			
Grade.				Grade.			
I (1-8)	..	..	..	120	VA (191-230)	..	30
II (9-24)	..	..	..	647	VB (231-270)	..	43
IIIA (25-30)	..	..	..	138	VC (271-310)	..	24
IIIB (31-70)	..	..	..	548	VD (311-350)	..	19
IVA (71-110)	..	..	..	186	VI (351-870)	..	175
IVB (111-150)	..	..	..	84			
IVC (151-190)	..	..	..	53	Total	..	2,067

Two half-time schools and thirty-eight schools with side schools attached are counted as separate schools.